

California Department of Rehabilitation  
State Plan Update  
2000 Program Year

**ATTACHMENT 2.1**

**PUBLIC COMMENT ON STATE PLAN  
POLICIES AND PROCEDURES**

The State plan is being made available on the Department's web page (<http://www.rehab.ca.gov>) for public review. To achieve wider exposure of the plan, a link has been established from California's WIA Implementation web page (<http://www.calwia.org/>).

Comments will be accepted on the plan until March 31, 2000. Comments can be made in writing and mailed to:

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Comments can be submitted via fax or electronic mail at:

(FAX) 916 263-7472  
Attention: Eva Collier

(electronic mail) [EvaCollier@dor.ca.gov](mailto:EvaCollier@dor.ca.gov)

The Department determined that given the limited time available for preparation of the plan and since there are no significant program changes in the plan that public hearings and extensive mailing would not be practical nor necessary for this plan.

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**ATTACHMENT 4.2(c)**

**SUMMARY OF INPUT AND RECOMMENDATIONS OF THE  
STATE REHABILITATION COUNCIL; RESPONSE OF THE  
DESIGNATED STATE UNIT; AND EXPLANATIONS FOR  
REJECTION OF INPUT OR RECOMMENDATIONS**

**COMMUNICATION AND COLLABORATION**

**Recommendation** The State Rehabilitation Council (SRC) recommends that Dr. Campisi, Director, jointly with the Council, work with the Governor's staff to fill vacancies and address the reappointment of members with expired terms on the SRC bringing it into conformance with Section 105 (b)(1) of the Rehabilitation Act of 1973 as Amended in 1998 (Public Law 105-220-August 7, 1998).

**Department Response** The Director agrees that filling vacancies on the SRC should be treated as one of the priority issues facing the Department, and will be working with the SRC to identify qualified individuals who are interested in serving as members.

**Recommendation** The SRC recommends that Dr. Campisi meet on a regular basis with the SRC's Executive/Planning Committee. The purpose of these meetings would be to share information, discuss concerns and key issues.

**Department Response** The Director also believes that regular meetings will benefit the Department in serving its clients, and critical to successfully meeting the new SRC requirements in the Rehabilitation Act Amendments.

**Recommendation** The SRC recommends that the mandate that it be a partner with the Department [e.g., participant at initial discussions/meetings and on an ongoing basis] in the development of policies, regulations, and activities that are functions of the SRC per Section 105 (c) of the Rehabilitation Act of 1973 as Amended in 1998 (Public Law 105-220, August 7, 1998) be fully implemented. This includes such things as VR Program evaluation, needs assessment, consumer satisfaction, Workforce Investment, comprehensive system of personnel development, eligibility/order of selection, etc.

**Department Response** The Department will continue the work started since the December 1999 appointment of Dr. Campisi to fully implement the Rehabilitation Act Amendments especially those related to the SRC.

**Recommendation** The SRC recommends that Department work groups, some of which appear to be working on streamlining and management projects which are issues that the SRC will also be addressing, prepare regular reports or minutes for the SRC. The purpose of these reports is to avoid duplication of efforts.

**Department Response** The groups described above, are managed through the Field Operations Division. Not all the groups prepare regular reports. As an alternative to the SRC recommendations, the Chief of the Constituent Support Unit should coordinate with the Deputy Director of the Field Operations Division on achieving the intent of this recommendation.

**Recommendation** The SRC recommends that additional staff resources be provided to the SRC to enable it to undertake and complete the expanded range of activities required by the 1998 Amendments. It is recommended that a joint SRC and Department effort be established under the Policy and Program Review Committee to review and evaluate the effectiveness of the VR Program as required by the 1998 Amendments to the Rehabilitation Act and that an annual report be submitted to the RSA Commissioner.

**Department Response** The Department agrees that additional staffing will have to be provided to the SRC to effectively meet the requirements in the Rehabilitation Act. The Department proposes that as an alternative to permanent assignments to the Unit, existing Central Office staff be assigned to work with the SRC on specific projects.

This arrangement will increase the coordination responsibilities for the Chief of the Constituent Support Unit, but it allows the Department and the SRC to complete the work required. There is an advantage to making project assignments to existing staff as they can be selected based on their subject expertise.

**Recommendation** It is recommended that greater coordination be established between the SRC and the advisory entities within the Department [e.g. Deaf and Hard of Hearing Advisory Committee, Blind Advisory Committee, Disability Advisory Committee, Ethnic Advisory Committee, etc.], and external entities [such as those specified in the Rehabilitation Act, i.e., IDEA Advisory Panel, State Developmental Disabilities Council, State Mental Health Planning Council, and the State Workforce Investment Board] and others as appropriate.

**Department Response** The Department agrees. The Chief of the Constituent Support Unit should develop those links with the program administrators staffing the advisory groups, because the Chief is the most knowledgeable of SRC requirements.

**Recommendation** It is recommended that efforts be undertaken to develop and maintain a relationship between SRC members and the staff of the district they reside in. This should include such things as office visits, meetings with staff, meetings with community partners, and the disability community.

**Department Response** The Department agrees with this recommendation and whenever requested will provide SRC members with letters of introduction.

## **CONSUMER SATISFACTION**

**Recommendation** The SRC recommends that the Consumer Satisfaction Phase I project be supported as an ongoing statewide project. The support for the project should include the updating of marketing materials and presentation tools to keep the project fresh. The importance of this project should be emphasized to field staff.

**Department Response** The Department's Research, Evaluation, Planning, and Statistics Section Chief will work with the SRC, the Department's External Affairs staff, and executive staff to implement this recommendation.

**Recommendation** The SRC recommends that a work group be set up under the SRC's Policy and Program Review Committee to review the results of the Consumer Satisfaction Phase I and II reports, and develop policy changes and training materials for improving areas identified in the reports from the Research, Evaluation, Planning, and Statistics Section.

**Department Response** The final results of the Phase II Consumer Satisfaction Survey will be ready soon, and this recommendation represents a very good next step. When the final report is published, a work group will be established.

### **CONTINUOUS IMPROVEMENT**

**Recommendation** The Department should initiate an agency-wide process to find ways to reduce the paperwork burden on counselors. Included in this recommendation is a review of the current computerized case recording procedures, and seek ways to improve the system making it user friendly and more flexible.

**Department Response** This is an important issue for the Department, and it is being addressed from several directions. There is a streamlining workgroup revising requirements in the *Case Recording Handbook*. The counseling staff are all receiving new personal computers to replace terminals and out-dated units through a new leasing arrangement. The leasing arrangement will enable the Department to provide current technology and make it possible to begin making improvements to the Field Computer System that were not possible when terminals were still in use. The survey regarding the Case Documentation Needs has been completed and the results will be available soon. Another streamlining workgroup is looking at process changes that will reduce the paperwork burden on staff.

**Recommendation** Develop new communication tools that can be used to inform both the Department's staff, partners and the disability community about issues, new policies, and planning activities.

**Department Response** One of the goals of the Department is improve both its internal and external communications. This is also a personal goal of the Director. The SRC can anticipate that in the next few months, new communication tools will be put into use by the Department.

**Recommendation** Expand the Department's Internet homepage to include more program information, links to partner's homepages, and job sites. The homepage should be expanded to receive public comments regarding proposed regulations and the annual state plan, all of which should be published on the homepage in addition to the traditional and/or legally required hard copy versions. The homepage shall also include information on the SRC.

**Department Response** The Department agrees that its homepage ([www.rehab.ca.gov](http://www.rehab.ca.gov)) should be expanded to include more information. One of the things that will be added immediately is information regarding the SRC. This year the state plan will be posted on the homepage for public review and comment. The homepage does have an address and a link for messages to be sent to the Department.

**Recommendation** DR's computer technology and information systems capabilities should be reviewed and upgraded as needed to ensure the timely and consistent availability of departmental financial/fiscal data.

**Department Response** The Department agrees with this recommendation, and has begun to focus on the kinds of data required for strategic decision making.

## **VOCATIONAL REHABILITATION NEEDS ASSESSMENT**

**Recommendation** The Rehabilitation Act, Section 101 (a)(15)(A), requires the Department and the SRC to conduct a statewide assessment of the rehabilitation needs of individuals with disabilities every three years. The SRC recommends that the Department and Council jointly develop the main assessment concepts and the goals

related to the assessment. The Department will prepare a schedule for the assessment, develop a budget, and identify responsible staff.

**Department Response** Historically the Department has used a variety of methods to continually assess vocational rehabilitation needs statewide, but the Department agrees fully with this recommendation. The Chief of the Research, Evaluation, Planning, and Statistics Section will manage the needs assessment. Since this recommendation was submitted, some research and planning has been done. Attachment 4.12(a)(b)(c)(1) contains information regarding the plans for conducting the assessment including staffing, scheduling, methodology, and budget. The Department appreciates the personal commitments that have been made by SRC members to work with their local District Administrator to conduct the assessment.

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**ATTACHMENT 4.6(a)(3)**

**REQUEST FOR WAIVER OF  
STATEWIDENESS**

The State plan cannot assure that services provided under the State plan will be available in all political subdivisions of the State as required in 34 CFR 361.25. The Waiver of Statewideness was originally requested in 1999, because the required assurance of statewideness could not be made. A continuation of the Waiver of Statewideness is requested in this State plan. The Department has entered into agreements in some political subdivisions which are not currently available in all political subdivisions. In accordance with 34 CFR 361.26, services will be provided in one or more political subdivision, which will increase services or expand the scope of services that are available statewide.

The Department maintains interagency agreements with the California Departments of Education, Social Services and Mental Health. These statewide agreements provide leadership, oversight and administrative support to locally developed cooperative agreements. The locally developed cooperative agreements provide:

1. Transition Partnership Projects. The Transition Partnership Projects serve secondary and post-secondary students with disabilities for the purpose of transitioning the Department's student-client from school to meaningful employment. Statewide, there are 83 programs administered through cooperative agreements with local school districts, SELPAs and County Offices of Education. These LEAs furnish the non-Federal share of costs either through an in-kind contribution or cash match. The in-kind contribution from the LEA is provided by redirected education staff providing unique patterns of vocational rehabilitation services exclusively to Department student-clients. Under these agreements the Department assigns vocational rehabilitation counselors to be actively involved as a liaison to the program. The Department opens cases and provides enhanced vocational rehabilitation services for at least one year prior to the student-client leaving high school. The LEA provides exclusive training and enhanced programming to enable clients to achieve employment utilizing community based instruction,



vocational and work-site training, job placement, and follow-up services to exiting student-clients.

2. **WorkAbility II.** The WorkAbility II Program serves adults and out-of-school youth with disabilities. Statewide there are 19 programs administered through cooperative agreements with Adult Schools and Regional Occupational Programs and Centers. These LEAs furnish the non-Federal share of costs either through an in-kind contribution or cash match. The in-kind contribution from the LEA is provided by redirected education staff providing unique patterns of vocational rehabilitation services exclusively to Department student-clients. Clients are referred to the WorkAbility II Programs by their vocational rehabilitation counselor for enhanced in-plan vocational rehabilitation services which include vocational and basic skills assessment, specific job skills training, pre-employment preparation, worksite evaluation, job placement, job coaching, and ongoing follow-up after vocational placement.
3. **WorkAbility III.** The WorkAbility III Program serves individuals with disabilities who are both community college students and Department clients desiring and in need of employment. Statewide there are 22 programs administered through cooperative agreements with Community Colleges. The community colleges furnish the non-Federal share of costs either through an in-kind contribution or cash match. The in-kind contribution from the Community College is provided by redirected education staff providing unique patterns of vocational rehabilitation services exclusively to Department student-clients. Clients are referred to the WorkAbility III Programs by their vocational rehabilitation counselor for in-plan vocational services. Augmented services include vocational assessment, career development, work experience, job-search-skills training and job development and placement.
4. **WorkAbility IV** The WorkAbility IV Program serves individuals with disabilities who are either California State University students or University of California students and Department clients desiring and in need of employment. Statewide there are 8 programs administered through cooperative agreements with California State Universities and Universities of California. These universities furnish the non-Federal share of costs through in-kind contributions. The in-kind contribution from the Universities is provided by redirected University staff providing unique patterns of vocational rehabilitation services exclusively to Department student-clients. Clients are referred to the WorkAbility IV Programs by their vocational rehabilitation counselor for in-plan vocational rehabilitation services. Department clients receive specialized vocational services such as job development and placement, job search skills instruction, work experience and volunteer placements, career and employment related counseling, and job retention services to student-clients and employers.
5. **Mental Health Cooperative Programs** The Mental Health Cooperative Programs serve County Mental Health clients with severe psychiatric disabilities and assist these clients in obtaining employment and living independently in their communities. Statewide there are 53 programs

administered through cooperative agreements with County Mental Health Agencies and private non-profit organizations. County Mental Health Agencies furnish the non-Federal share of costs through in-kind and cash contributions. The in-kind contribution from the County Mental Health Agencies is provided by redirected County Mental Health staff providing unique vocational rehabilitation services exclusively to Department clients. Clients are referred to the Department by participating County Mental Health Agencies for vocational rehabilitation services. The cooperative agreements develop linkages to community agencies such as private, non-profit agencies specializing in employment service programs for persons with severe psychiatric disabilities. Mental Health Cooperatives provide unique vocational service options for clients, which include vocational assessment and evaluation, personal and social adjustment, employment services, job coaching, and supported employment. County Mental Health Agencies provide long-term follow-along services after the vocational rehabilitation case is closed.

The traumatic Brain Injury Cooperative Program is also a joint venture between the Department of Mental Health and the Department. The Department of Mental Health furnishes the non-federal share of costs through cash contributions. The cooperative serves Department clients with traumatic brain injuries at three sites statewide. All sites provide personal, vocational, and social adjustment services, and one site also provides vocational assessment services to Department clients. In addition to vocational rehabilitation services, the Department of Mental Health funds services to clients using a post-acute continuum of care model which includes community reintegration and supported living services.

6. Welfare Cooperative Program The Welfare Cooperative Programs serve Department clients who receive Temporary Assistance to Needy Families Assistance. The Department and the Department of Social Services have collaborated in developing an interagency agreement that provides the basis for identifying 10 select local county cooperative projects to provide enhanced vocational rehabilitation services to clients with disabilities who meet the eligibility for both CalWORKs (California's Welfare Program) and Vocational Rehabilitation Programs. The Department of Social Services furnishes the non-Federal share of costs through a cash match which supports new vocational rehabilitation counselor allocations and case services funds. Local projects are implemented through cooperative agreements between County Welfare Departments and the Department. Local projects provide the means by which CalWORKs recipients and applicants with disabilities gain direct access to the resources available through the Department of Rehabilitation while maintaining direct access to CalWORKs program services, such as child care assistance, and ancillary supportive services.

The Department provides services through community rehabilitation programs. The Department's Community Resources Development Section works with the local private non-profit programs to establish, improve, and develop programs. The Department also has

agreements for supported employment services, which include local mental health agencies to provide services for individuals with severe psychiatric disabilities.

Each local public agency that enters into an agreement to provide vocational rehabilitation services is required, within the formal agreement, to make available to the Department the non-Federal share of funds. The agreements are kept on file in the Department's Contract Section and the Department's local office. Local administration of the agreements is typically managed by either the vocational rehabilitation specialist or district administrator for the district. Compliance with the funding requirement is further assured by audits performed by the Department's Audit Section.

All services provided through a cooperative partner of the Department must be approved in advance of provision. All approved services are incorporated into the Individualized Plan for Employment (IPE). The IPE is jointly developed by the Department and the client. The IPE development includes any cooperative partner who will be involved in the provision of services.

The Department has been operating under its Order of Selection Policy since August 1995. All Department clients, regardless of who will be providing services to them, are subject to the Order of Selection Policy. The Department assures compliance with its Order of Selection policy by not referring clients to any cooperative partner until the client is eligible to receive services directly from the Department.

The Department will continue, under this State plan, to work with its existing partners in providing vocational rehabilitation services. The Department will also continue its efforts to increase the statewide availability of enhanced vocational rehabilitation services.

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**ATTACHMENT 4.9(c)**

**COOPERATION, COLLABORATION, AND COORDINATION  
WITH OTHER AGENCIES AND OTHER ENTITIES**

**(a) COOPERATIVE AGREEMENTS WITH OTHER COMPONENTS OF  
STATEWIDE WORKFORCE INVESTMENT SYSTEMS.**

The Department maintains cooperative and interagency agreements with other entities that are components of the statewide workforce investment system of California. The Department is an invited partner in California's current One-Stop Career Center program, and the Department's district administrators are managing the agreements in the current system. In anticipation of fully implementing all requirements of the Workforce Investment Act (WIA) by July 1, 2000, with the Department as a mandated partner, the Department developed a standardized memorandum of understanding (MOU) used at local levels throughout the State. The district administrators will be working to assure all current and future MOUs meet the requirements of the Rehabilitation Services Information Memorandum, RSA-IM-00-09, dated December 17, 1999.

**(b) REPLICATION OF COOPERATIVE AGREEMENTS.**

The Department is entering into separate MOUs, with local boards and all the boards, which will address the Department services, funding, referrals, duration, and procedures for amending the MOU. The Department centrally developed standard templates to assist the Department's district administrators in developing local cooperative agreements with entities (One-Stop Centers) that are components of the workforce investment system which addresses cross-training, information technology, intake and referral, employer outreach, staff roles and responsibilities, and dispute resolution policies. To further facilitate this process, authority to sign the MOUs was delegated to the Department's district administrators. Greater continuity will be achieved by longer term MOUs of five (5) years.

**(c) INTERAGENCY COOPERATION WITH OTHER AGENCIES AND ENTITIES.**

(1) The Department continues to engage in interagency agreements with California Departments of Education, Social Services, and Mental Health to foster interagency cooperation with and utilization of the services and facilities of the Federal, State, and local agencies and programs. These statewide agreements provide leadership, oversight, and administrative support to locally developed cooperative agreements that combine staff and resources for a team approach to vocational rehabilitation services for individuals with disabilities.

(2) The Department continues to encourage the development of career opportunities and employment outcomes for students with disabilities by improving the cooperation among special education, vocational education, secondary, college and university programs. The Department anticipates maintaining the level of transition services through the following programs:

(A) The Transition Partnership Project is an interagency project of the Department and the California Department of Education which provides transition services for secondary school students who have a link to special education.

(B) Workability II Programs, an interagency project of the Department and the California Department of Education, serve students who are clients of the Department and are enrolled in regional occupational programs or adult education programs.

(C) Workability III Programs assist clients of the Department who are enrolled in a community college in their transition from college to careers.

(D) Workability IV Programs provide transition services to clients of the Department who are students in the California State University or University of California systems.

The Department also maintains liaison relationships with education agencies that are not in a transition program to facilitate the referral and application of interested students with disabilities.

(3) Through the Department's Community Resources Development Section, private non-profit vocational rehabilitation service programs are provided assistance in establishing, improving and developing community rehabilitation programs. The Department continues to work with the Rehabilitation Continuing Education Program in Region IX of the Rehabilitation Services Administration for community rehabilitation program staff education and training.

(4) The Department continues to make efforts to develop a variety of arrangements to assist in the provision of supported employment services to assure extended services. For individuals with developmental disabilities, California has an entitlement program. A component of this program is administered by the Department. This program, the Habilitation Services Program, assumes funding responsibility during the transition phase while the client is still in open status with the vocational rehabilitation program, and provides extended services through the term of employment. Often the county mental health agency provides the extended services for individuals with severe psychiatric disabilities who are part of the Department's mental health cooperative programs.

**(d) COORDINATION WITH EDUCATION OFFICIALS.**

The Department and the California Department of Education have put in place an interagency agreement to provide the State guidance and plans for providing transition services to all students with disabilities. This Interagency Agreement provides for:

(1) Staff to provide consultation and technical assistance to local educational agencies in the transition of students with disabilities from school to post-school activities, including vocational rehabilitation services.

(2) Support for local cooperative agreements between local education agencies and local Department offices that provide for student transition planning that facilitates the development and completion of their individualized education programs.

(3) Support for local cooperative agreements that define the roles and responsibilities, including financial responsibilities, of each agency.

(4) Support for local cooperative agreements that specify procedures for outreach to, and identification of, students with disabilities who need transition services.

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**ATTACHMENT 4.11(b)**

**COMPREHENSIVE SYSTEM OF PERSONNEL  
DEVELOPMENT**

In order to develop a comprehensive system to obtain and maintain a sufficient number of “qualified rehabilitation professionals” to serve the state’s clients, the Department will/has perform(ed) the following tasks:

1. Assess the educational background of the existing vocational rehabilitation counseling staff;
2. Develop an assessment and training system that ensures that counselors have or receive the training required to be successful;
3. Develop a State educational “standard”;
4. Develop classification specifications that mirror the State’s standard;
5. Estimate the number of anticipated clients and the number of vocational rehabilitation professionals needed to serve the anticipated clients.

The Department has made progress in implementing its comprehensive system of personnel development as outlined below:

1. Assess the educational background of the existing vocational rehabilitation counseling staff.

The Department prepared and sent an assessment to the 823 current vocational rehabilitation counselors employed by the Department. This survey requested information regarding the employee’s current classification, tenure, education, counseling experience (both within and outside of State government), and whether the employee has the Certified Rehabilitation Counselor Certification. In addition, the survey asked a variety of questions to determine whether employees would be motivated to enhance his/her educational level given none or partial assistance by the State, full assistance by the State and/or a pay differential upon completion. Employees were encouraged to complete this survey by both the Department and their union. We were successful in obtaining an 89.8 percent response rate (739 responses to the 823 surveys sent).



Despite the fact that currently the minimum educational requirement to become a vocational rehabilitation counselor is a Bachelor's Degree, 55 percent of the 739 employees that responded to the survey indicated that they possess a Master's Degree. Thirty-eight (38) percent indicated that they possess a Bachelor's Degree. In addition, between 25 and 43 percent of the 739 employees that responded to the survey indicated they would be interested in pursuing a Master's Degree if either State assistance/funding and/or a pay differential was available. The percent of those interested varied depending upon the degree to which State assistance/funding and/or a pay differential was available. The Department is targeting the over 300 vocational rehabilitation counselors who do not possess a Master's Degree and encouraging all qualifying counselors to pursue Certified Rehabilitation Counselor credits as key clients of our Comprehensive System of Personnel Development.

2. Develop an assessment and training system that ensures counselors have or receive the training required to be successful.

The Department is committed to maintaining a training system that ensures counselors have or receive the training necessary to be successful. In January 1999, the Department conducted a survey to determine the basic knowledge, skills, and abilities that rehabilitation professionals must possess to be successful. In consultation with the Department's Research, Evaluation, Planning, and Statistics Unit, the Staff Development Unit developed a survey instrument to gather staff input on individual training needs. This survey asked each employee to measure his/her need for training in a number of job performance and skill competence related subject areas. Information gained from this survey has been used to develop new training courses that are then incorporated into the annual Staff Development Training Program. This survey is conducted biannually. In addition, the Staff Development Unit coordinates another survey, on an annual basis, through the District Training Coordinators to determine the number of staff that will be sent to each training course. This information is then used to determine the annual training calendar. Additional ongoing information regarding staff training needs is obtained through consultation with supervisory, management, and executive staff.

The Staff Development Unit currently provides in-service training in core vocational rehabilitation courses for new counseling staff and to refresh the skills of long-term staff members. In addition, the Core Rehabilitation Program Courses have been approved to meet the continuing education requirements for Certified Rehabilitation Counselors. The Staff Development Unit also provides a variety of supervisory, managerial and general training courses. The courses currently provided are listed below:

Core Rehabilitation Program Courses  
Case Assessment and Documentation  
Caseload Management

Introduction to Rehabilitation Counseling  
Interviewing Skills  
Mapping Assistive Technology  
Plan Development  
Rehabilitation Technology  
Social Security Work Incentives

Management and Supervisory Courses

Ergonomics  
Casework and Fiscal Management  
Managing Diversity in the Workplace  
Reducing Conflict/Improving Workplace Communication  
Training for Supervisors

General Staff Courses

Career Development  
Con-nect  
Diversity in the Workplace  
Effective Communication Skills  
Getting Organized  
Personal Safety  
Presentation Skills for Non-Trainers  
New Employee Orientation  
Support Staff Academy

Based upon the needs assessment survey process mentioned above, the Staff Development Unit is developing a Job Placement/Career Development Course and a Managing Change Course, as well as collaborating with the Department's Medical Consultants to develop training courses regarding the Medical Aspects of Disability (15 courses regarding a variety of disabilities and diseases).

The Staff Development Unit will also incorporate Workforce Investment Act (WIA) and the 1998 Amendments to the Rehabilitation Act into existing and newly developed in-service training courses. In addition, the Staff Development Unit will collaborate with the Rehabilitation Services Administration to deliver training on the federal perspective to vocational rehabilitation staff. Field staff will be included in the development, design, and delivery of WIA in-service training to address such topics as: the purpose of WIA; steps to electronically link and/or co-locate with one-stop service delivery partners; Americans with Disabilities Act accessibility issues for

Department clients; negotiation skills; marketing the Department's services in a one-stop environment; understanding the culture of one-stop systems; and problem-solving to ensure a seamless service delivery for individuals with disabilities. Field staff will also participate in the development, design, and delivery of training to WIA partners to ensure an understanding of the unique roles and responsibilities of the Department and the distinctive issues related to the provision of services to individuals with disabilities.

The Staff Development Unit also contracts for specialized training when necessary to meet the staff development needs of the Department. These training courses are provided by the State Training Center (including a mandatory 2 week course for new supervisors and managers), the Health and Welfare Data Center, the State Electronic Data Processing Education Program, as well as through private training providers and California Multiple Awards Schedule (CMAS) approved vendors.

The Staff Development Unit utilizes a computer registration system to provide class rosters, reasonable accommodation needs, certificates, individual transcripts, and a variety of specialized reports.

3. Develop a State educational "standard".

The Department's classification for Vocational Rehabilitation Counselor specifies a pattern for a candidate with a Master's Degree as well as patterns for candidates with other levels of education and experience. Candidates with Master's Degrees are typically hired before others with less education. Candidates with less than a Master's Degree are hired when there are not candidates with Master's Degrees available and interested, or when the selected candidate has the language skills or cultural knowledge required to served identified ethnic groups who have been unserved or underserved in the past.

The number of applicants for the Vocational Rehabilitation Counselor exam has been decreasing every year. Despite participation in job fairs, advertising the counselor examinations and vacancies on the Internet and in the California State jobs periodical. This has resulted in recruitment difficulties in some areas of the State. In addition, given the diversity of California's population, the Department has a great need for Vocational Rehabilitation Counselors with language skills and cultural knowledge so that the Department can continue to serve those who have been unserved or underserved in the past.

Currently, the professional positions in rehabilitation counseling are comprised of three separate classifications (Vocational Rehabilitation Counselor, Vocational Rehabilitation Trainee, and Senior Vocational Rehabilitation Counselor). To strengthen the standard for hiring qualified rehabilitation professionals, the Department has developed a proposal to combine these classes into one which will have five separate salary ranges. The salary ranges are tied to education and experience. This single class proposal will be used to enhance the State recruitment standard, encourage continuing education, recruit professionals with higher education, and increase staff retention by enabling staff to reach higher compensation levels at a faster rate. Employees will hire in at a higher salary range with the Master's Degree, and in cases where necessary to hire staff with an educational level less than a Master's Degree, such staff will start at a lower salary range and will transition to higher salary ranges as they gain education and experience.

4. Develop classification specifications that mirror the State's standard.

The actions listed under item number 3 above also relate to this segment.

In addition, collaborative meetings with the six California State Universities with Masters Programs in Vocational Rehabilitation have been conducted. (These Universities include California State University San Francisco, California State University Sacramento, California State University Los Angeles, California State University Fresno, California State University San Diego, and California State University San Bernardino.) The meetings have included representatives from these Universities, executive staff, Field Operations Division staff, Personnel Office staff, Staff Development Unit staff, Labor Relations Unit staff, and AFSCME Union staff and members. The purpose of these meetings is to create a partnership with the Universities to expand the availability of Master's programs, Certification programs and training courses.

Please note that while the Department is working to make broad changes in the vocational rehabilitation counselor classification specification, the following other work is taking place to expand educational and training opportunities:

- In collaboration with the Interwork Institute at San Diego State University, a distance-learning program has been established. The first class (30 participants) will be receiving a Masters Degree in Vocational Rehabilitation Counseling this year. Recruitment for the next class is underway. The Department provides financial support to this distance learning program. In addition, the Department provides a mentor program and weekly leave time to the participants;
- A number of Department staff have completed the Certificate Program in Post-Employment Training in Rehabilitation Administration through the Interwork Institute at San Diego State University;
- The Staff Development Unit is developing a resource library that contains periodicals, books, videos, and other materials appropriate for use as supplemental information

for training and course work or as resources for job related self-study or research. Materials are being logged into a circulation database. This circulation database will be available to field staff and clients via the Internet. The Staff Development Unit is currently creating resource library policies and procedures. The library is expected to be operational by the beginning of Program Year 2000.

5. Estimate the number of anticipated clients and the number of vocational rehabilitation professionals needed to serve the anticipated clients.

In order to estimate the number of anticipated clients and the number of vocational rehabilitation professionals needed to serve the anticipated clients, the Department maintains a two tracking systems. Caseload estimates used to establish Order of Selection service levels are developed using existing actual caseload data and projections for both new Individual Employment Plans and closures. New plan estimates are developed by program, and are generally based on a combination of new plan data by program from current and prior years and program input provided by the management and staff in the Department's Field Operations Division. Data pertaining to new plans and closures, both in the current year and prior years, is evaluated, by program, to identify trends that can be used to project future program activity. Although current and historical data provide some basis for estimating new caseload levels, projections are also reviewed with program management and staff to determine how various activities in headquarters or the field offices will impact caseload levels in specific programs.

The Department also maintains a tracking system which is utilized to maintain an ongoing record of the Department's total approved staffing and the number of vacant positions within the Department. A particular emphasis of the tracking system is the number of individuals who are providing vocational rehabilitation services and the number of clients in his/her caseload. Another major emphasis of the tracking system is the breakdown of counseling staff who have a specialty caseload or work with members of an identified ethnic group.

The Department maintains an ongoing projection of its need to recruit counseling staff to meet both current and future needs. This needs projection is vital to the Department, because the California State Civil Service System requires early scheduling for testing and the maintenance of a list of qualified candidates for employment. The projection of staffing requirements are complicated by the necessity to operate under the Department's Order of Selection policy.

The Department is committed to providing the funds and staff necessary to implement a training plan to improve the skills and knowledge of vocational rehabilitation counselors. In August of 1994, the Staff Development Unit was comprised of one Training Officer II, two Training Officer Is, and an Office Technician. The Staff Development Unit is currently comprised of one Training Officer III, one Training Officer II, six Training Officer Is, three Analysts, one Office Technician, and three temporary support staff positions. The number of training courses provided by the Department has

expanded from three courses to twenty-two courses with four additional training courses in development.

The Department was successful in obtaining basic, as well as priority, in-service training grant funds for the Federal fiscal years 1997 through 2000. Priority funds are being used to develop a model training course of successful job placement strategies for persons with disabilities entitled "Job Placement". Furthermore, the Department is collaborating with the San Diego State University on their Long-Term Training Grant. This will provide additional educational opportunities for departmental employees seeking Master's Degrees and/or certification in rehabilitation-related areas such as Rehabilitation Technology. We have also asked all California State Universities offering rehabilitation programs to provide information regarding any grants, loans, stipends or distance-learning programs. This information will be shared with all Department staff. It is hoped that these efforts will increase educational opportunities while either minimizing or eliminating costs to the Department or employees.

California Department of Rehabilitation  
State Plan Update

**ATTACHMENT 4.12(a)(b)(c)(1)**

**ASSESSMENTS; ESTIMATES; AND  
GOALS AND PRIORITIES**

**Assessments**

*Statewide Needs Assessment*

The Department has continuously assessed the vocational rehabilitation needs in California. The Department is working with the Region IX Rehabilitation Continuing Education Study Group (RCEPSG) to develop a comprehensive and systematic assessment methodology to implement statewide. Over a three-year period each district will conduct an assessment based on the methodology that is adopted. It is necessary to conduct a more scientific assessment to acquire the data necessary to effectively represent the vocational rehabilitation needs of individuals with disabilities in the post Workforce Investment Act environment. The following guide is being considered for adoption:

**A Guide for Comprehensive and Systematic Needs Assessment for  
the California Department of Rehabilitation**

This guide was developed by the Region IX Rehabilitation Continuing Education Program Study Group (RCEPSG) consisting of the following members: Ron Jacobs, Ph.D., Fred McFarlane, Ph.D., Tom Siegfried, Michael Sullivan, Ph.D., and Jim Tunstall.

During the development of this position paper the RCEPSG is engaged in the continual process of reviewing and evaluating needs assessment methodology literature and models concerning the development of a cost-effective comprehensive needs

assessment model for the California Department of Rehabilitation (CaDR). Identified in this position paper is a comprehensive needs assessment model that RCEPSG is recommending along with “*important issues*” and “*concerns*” that need to be addressed in the needs assessment process.

## **Task**

The Rehabilitation Act requires state vocational rehabilitation agencies to assess the rehabilitation needs of individuals within their state, and to clearly relate their planning of programs and services to those needs. This assessment must be accomplished in cooperation with the State Rehabilitation Council. To arrive at an effective planning process to meet the needs, the state agency must evaluate itself concerning capabilities and needs. To meet the requirements the state agency should broaden their input and insight and examine their program structure in relationship to the total state service delivery system within the state. Information and data from the needs assessment process provides a foundation for the state plan.

## **Introduction**

This RCEPSG comprehensive needs assessment model will provide answers and direction to today’s planning and allocation issues, and provide guidance in planning for the future structure and resource requirements for the CaDR.

This comprehensive needs assessment model is developed within the context of the Department’s service delivery system. It is recommended that it be incorporated into the agency’s mission, values, and objectives. Results from this model will account for the social, political, and economic realities of California, which will influence the agency’s capacity to plan based on accurate and comprehensive needs assessment information and data. Needs assessment tools will be tailor-made for the agency, consistent with its capability for systematic planning and development activities.

**The RCEPSG definition of needs assessment is as follows:**



A needs assessment is a continuing process for systematically gathering and synthesizing valid information on the needs of individuals that is relevant to the planning and development of the California Department of Rehabilitation. Needs assessment is a proactive, intentional activity. Although, incidental and casual sources of data may be integrated, formal needs assessment will be carried out on an ongoing basis, in a systematic manner, and become a internal part of the California agency's planning function. Based on RCEPSG continual needs assessment process, current needs of target populations can be identified, the needs of different groups can be prioritized, and the Department can plan how resources will be brought together to address needs (Menz, 1991).

### **The Functions for Needs Assessment**

The outcome of this needs assessment model will address the following:

1. *Profile rehabilitation services throughout the state.*
2. *Project needed services and redeployment of services.*
3. *Identify common and unique needs of underrepresented groups and special populations.*
4. *Identify needs of specific groups of individuals with disabilities in California, and how existing resources can be redeployed to address these needs.*
5. *Estimate the adequacy of current program coverage and provide guidelines to improve coverage for targeted disability groups.*
6. *Identify gaps in rehabilitation services.*
7. *Provide data and rationale for the development of the California State Plan and adaptations to the plan that relate to changes in federal and state mandates, such as WIA.*

## **Identifying and Accessing Relevant Data**

### Formal vs. Informal Assessment

A balancing process must occur concerning formal vs. informal assessment. In the past much information or data relating to needs for services were obtained informally. Informal sources of information are not generally representative even though they may be more vocal and political and compelling at times. Information from such sources will be evaluated against results from formal assessment processes. Formal assessment processes will not only produce accurate data, will also provide information that is more compelling and reliable than the suggested offerings from informal sources.

### Dynamics of Need

The extent of need and the relative importance of various needs from consumers will change over time and across geographic locations in California. In the past, the needs assessment process involved determining needs at a point in time. The design of this needs assessment process will rely on the systematic gathering over time, rather than relying on static description at one or two points in time. The proposed needs assessment will consider the incidence of new need as well as the prevalence of current need.

### The Credibility Variable:

Unserved or potential rehabilitation applicants may not know enough about their disability to accurately identify the special services they might require. Also, professionals will often know what needs for service there are among unserved populations, but not necessarily what the needs might be among a population they have not served. Who knows needs best is an important issue, in that each of these sources can provide data on only a few parts on the entire picture of need. To address

this condition, the RCEPSG proposed needs assessment will draw samples from a variety of perspectives to acquire a better sense of the multi-faceted needs of a given population.

### Sensitivity to Disabling Conditions

The design of the RCEPSG needs assessment process must take into consideration that certain situations will require considerable tact and subtlety in assessment techniques, sampling questions and interview protocol. Additional expense and time may be required to locate and solicit necessary indicators of data concerning consumers with disabilities.

### Ethics in Data Collection

Special precautions and responsibilities must be assumed by staff conducting needs assessment to insure individual privacy and protection. These precautions must be made when designing the assessment process and when collecting, compiling, and formulating conclusions and recommendations from the assessment data.

## **Surveys of Consumers to Determine Need**

Surveys are the most popular method for gathering information on needs. The survey approach may include mail and telephone questionnaires, structured personal interviews, and electronically activated technology. These methods provide a flexible means for assessing the expectations and needs of sub-groups of the target population and other audiences involved in the methodology.

On the other hand, there are many disadvantages on only relying on the survey method to solicit information on need. Some of the disadvantages are: 1) Consumers do not have time or opportunity to participate, 2) Consumers feel they infringe on the right of privacy, 3) there is fear and self incrimination or negative feedback from other consumers, 4) Consumers are unable to understand survey questions, 5) Consumers do not have ready access to the information that is requested.

The advantages of survey methods are very attractive. Significantly larger numbers of consumers and their specific need can be acquired with a “carefully” constructed survey. If the number of responses is large enough, and if the valuing of a need approaches consensus level, the possibility that non-respondents’ perceptions that are not reflected becomes more likely. The needs assessment model will integrate personal interviews among the survey techniques where quantitative depth can be obtained to supplement the quantifiable data that will be obtained through pencil and paper questionnaires.

### Key Informant Surveys

This approach is relatively inexpensive and straightforward. As questions are posed directly to well placed and influential people, both questionnaires and structured interviews can be utilized to uncover needs data. Some of the types of questions key informant surveys can help answer are the following:

“Which disability groups are underserved or not served at all?”  
or “What are the types of services they need?”

### Prevalence and Incidence Surveys

This technique is considered a special purpose survey. The objectives of these surveys is to estimate how many people need rehabilitation services and the types of services they need. Surveys designed to estimate only the number of individuals who became in need of services during a particular time period, are called incidence studies. Surveys designed to estimate the number of individuals in need of services regardless of when their need began, are prevalence studies. The types of questions that are utilized in these approaches can help answer the following: “How many people within California need various independent services?” or “How many people residing in California need supportive employment services?” or “How many people in each individual district need other vocational rehabilitation services?” or “Where are the people who need various rehabilitation services located within the individual districts and California?” This type of approach is viewed by researchers as the most direct and scientifically valid and stable of all the needs assessment approaches.

### Community Surveys

In this type of format, former consumers, current consumers, persons who did not meet one or more eligibility criteria for the program, individuals whose needs could not be met by the program, (e.g., dropped out), individuals who may have need, and the general public may all be targets for a community survey.

## **Group Approaches to Needs Assessment**

### **Structured Groups**

Structured groups usually provide supplemental needs information, rather than being an alternative to surveys. Structured groups can give quantitative information to balance and test quantitative findings. This technique can be utilized concerning problems where the topic may be sensitive, where spontaneous opinions may not be expressed by some consumers, and where consensus is sought on priority needs.

### **Community Forums and Hearings**

The community forum is a variation of the structured group approach. This process allows testimony from the general public at open meetings. This approach is not a substitute for systematically collected needs information. Rather, it can be an important supplement to the process. Unfortunately, this approach has several disadvantages including poor attendance and input from selected groups. Many times information falls outside the parameters of rehabilitation.

## **Estimating Capabilities and Resources within the California Department of Rehabilitation**

An adequate needs assessment cannot be accomplished without assessing capabilities and resources of the CaDR. Resource inventories can provide a description of existing resources of services (staff and procedures) in terms of the capabilities, coverage, and outcomes. Basically, these inventories examine caseloads and performance of rehabilitation staff directly responsible to the CaDR. These inventories are of critical importance once consumer needs are adequately determined. Typical questions that

can be addressed with data from these inventories are the following: “What is the current capacity and utilization of basic services?” or “What additional types of services and service capabilities are needed in particular districts?” or “Which district or branch office staff are best skilled to work with this population?”. This inventory process can suggest the extent to which present resources serve an identified or targeted population, how many consumers are served, how well current resources lead to important outcomes, how many additional persons might be effectively served, and where gaps in present resources may exist and cannot be extended to meet newly identified consumer needs.

### ***RCEPSG Model***

Below is a “general” overview of the recommended approach and protocol for the initiation of a comprehensive needs assessment model for CaDR. Information and the discussion of important issues to this point were presented to demonstrate that the RCEPSG is versatile and competent in all aspects of the needs assessment process. Presently, the RCEPSG cannot articulate the “*correct*” or “*final*” methodology approach without input from the State Rehabilitation Council, the field and executive staff. RCEPSG, with continuous input from CaDR will customize and tailor-make approaches, techniques and processes unique to the organization and consumer. Because of the size of California, and the large and diversified population base, it is highly recommended that this needs assessment process be conducted over a developmental period of time. The importance of appropriate, accurate and comprehensive results cannot be underestimated because of its foundation importance to the successful direction of the agency.

The RCEPSG model is a continual process because the fundamental issues continue to reappear and must be re-addressed. Not all significant changes in the program required by federal mandate and needs results will occur at once. It is anticipated, and has been demonstrated through other needs assessment activities, that needs assessment and planning do not produce a successful final solution without a continual developmental process.

Systems as complex and established as the CaDR usually change in incremental steps. As such, the utility of the assessment may not be fully realized in the initial cycle, but

may become a continuing source of information and guidance to the program planning process in the individual districts and central office. The RCEPSG model has systematic cycles, involving the building of information that accumulates, where an increasingly complete picture develops, what is, what is needed and what can be accomplished utilizing the agency resources. The RCEPSG is increasingly able to help the agency to meet consumer needs as administrators and planners come to realize what has been and what has yet to be accomplished.

#### RCEPSG Process:

The needs assessment process is systemic and sequential but flexible to integrate changes. The first year will start with a pilot program implemented in two districts. Each year after that, new districts will be added to the needs assessment process. Each year the needs assessment methodology and design will be augmented with feedback from the prior year. This approach will provide a unique look at each individual district and the state as a whole concerning consumer populations, delivery of services and impact of services.

#### RCEPSG Structure:

RCEPSG, in partnership with the CaDR and the State Rehabilitation Council, will utilize different advisory groups to provide essential information and knowledge concerning the methodology approach and workscope.

#### RCEPSG Model Pilot Approach:

The pilot approach will consist of implementing the RCEPSG model in two districts, one urban and one rural. RCEPSG will conduct meetings with both district administrators and staff, and customize and formalize a methodology approach and guidelines to conduct the needs assessment process. At the completion of the needs assessment process in both of the districts, RCEPSG with the two district administrators and supervisors will provide feedback for the improvement of the needs assessment design and procedures. The next step will be to develop a timetable to conduct needs assessment in the other districts.

## RCEPSG Model Needs of Specific Populations and Service Providers:

Many emerging populations can make unexpected demands on present rehabilitation resources. The impact of their disabilities and cultural differences is going to require unique rehabilitation planning and skills development. The RCEPSG Model will address this situation and assess needs of individuals: with severe disabilities, chronic mental illness, developmental disabilities, specific learning disabilities, traumatically brain injured, blindness and visual impairments, deafness, minorities and underserved, and native Americans.

The RCEPSG Model position is, any meaningful attempt to align service delivery capacity with priority unmet needs identified through a needs assessment must include a careful consideration of community business and the following service providers; rehabilitation facilities, supported employment, and independent living/community rehabilitation programs.

## RCEPSG Model Sequences:

### *Phase One: Development and Research Design (March 1 – March 31)*

- 4.1 Meet with for district administrators and the State Rehabilitation Council to thoroughly discuss the nature of the comprehensive needs assessment and initiate the work plan design
- 4.2 Review past needs assessment data
- 4.3 Complete review of literature and outline best practices on comprehensive needs assessment

### *Phase Two: Instrumentation Development (March 1- March 31)*

- 4.1 Identify populations for screening samples
  - (a) community consumers/organizations
  - (b) community partners/business/organizations
- 4.1 Develop questionnaires for mail, telephone and personal interview survey techniques
- 4.2 Identify database for analysis

### *Phase Three: Pilot Study (April 1 - June 30)*



- 4.1 Meeting with Fresno and San Francisco on pilot study
- 4.2 Train interviewers for data collection
- 4.3 Analyze demographic data from Federal/State/County sources
- 4.4 Conduct mail, telephone and interview surveys
- 4.5 Follow-up incomplete survey methods
- 4.6 Enter information into database

*Phase Four: Preliminary Analysis (July 10 - August 15)*

- 4.1 Develop report on findings
- 4.2 Review analysis procedures and methods
- 4.3 Refine instrumentation
- 4.4 Meeting with DA's to consider modifications

*Phase Five: Community Groups (August 16 – September 15)*

- 4.1 Conduct one “open meeting” for consumers/organizations in each district
- 4.2 Conduct one “open meeting” for partners/business/organizations in each district

*Phase Six: Final Analysis, Report and Presentation (September 15 – October 15)*

- 4.1 Integrate information into final report of findings
- 4.2 Develop report of interpretations and recommendations
- 4.3 Present report and outline schedule addressing needs in all districts

## **Format for the Needs Assessment Report**

**Executive Summary.** This will consist of a brief overview and foundation of the study. This will take very few pages to provide the objectives, findings, implications for services, and recommendations.

**Description of the Study.** This will include statements of purpose for the study, its objectives for assessment, and the context for which this study was developed, designed and conducted.

**Methodology.** Included in this section will be significant data sources (questionnaires,

interview formats, instrumentation). How pertinent assessment data were identified and collected, the extent and quality of the data used in the assessment, and the general precautions and procedures used to synthesize the data and address the questions and objectives of the study.

**Results and Findings.** This section deals with answers to the questions and objectives concerning the assessment process. Also, table and graphic presentations will be utilized to enhance the understandability of the results.

**Implications and Recommendations.** In this section, implications of the data will be presented along with the potential effects and resource allocations. Also, opinions and actions will be presented to meet the identified needs.

## SUMMARY

A study group from the Region IX Rehabilitation Continuing Education Program, Interwork Institute, San Diego State University was formed to develop a comprehensive needs assessment study for the California Department of Rehabilitation. This position paper presents draft outline of a needs assessment model that identifies and discusses important issues and concerns that must be addressed when conducting a needs assessment study. The model must have a comprehensive approach, with a systematic cycles design and assessment tools that are customized to meet the needs of the project and the agency. The examination of need will look not only at consumers and potential consumers, but also at business and other service programs, and will include an in-house review of capabilities and resources. There are many issues that need to be incorporated into the design when assessing the needs of different disability populations. The RCEPSG have presented some of these issues in this position paper. The design approach consists of developing a pilot and field testing the model in a rural and an urban district. This will provide foundation needs assessment information and data and an opportunity to re-assess methodology, assessment tools, and procedures. The next step will be to incorporate a developmental plan for the needs assessment model to be implemented in all of the districts. A developmental plan is needed because of the size of California and the diversified population base. This needs assessment model will provide comprehensive

information and reliable data enabling effective decisions to be made concerning need, resources, and the direction of the agency.

### ***Consumer Satisfaction Phase I***

The Department will continue with its Consumer Satisfaction Phase I project. As discussed in Attachment 4.2(c), the Department will follow the recommendation made by the State Rehabilitation Council to support this project with funding to keep the marketing materials fresh thus encouraging continued local participation.

The district offices collect the survey forms used in this project. The district administrators review the responses and work on any areas of problems that may be identified within their service area. This includes community rehabilitation programs where the survey forms are also made available. This project is a continuous source of immediate feedback to the district administrator, and has been valuable in planning changes at the local level. The State Rehabilitation Council and the Department's executive staff receive quarterly reports on the responses being received.

It is important to reduce the burden in the district offices associated with tabulating the survey results. With that end in mind, a special program was written by the Santa Rosa District rehabilitation specialist. Each district received a computer disk that contained the program. The new program allows the individual entering the data to quickly enter the responses and comments and then to forward the information to the Research, Evaluation, Planning, and Statistics Section in the Central Office with a minimum of steps.

### ***Consumer Satisfaction Phase II***

The final report on the Phase II Consumer Satisfaction has been submitted to the State Rehabilitation Council. The Department will be jointly working with the Council to identify areas in either service or service deliver to be improved. Strategies will be developed to facilitate improvement especially following the implementation of the Workforce Investment Act. The Council made this recommendation in Attachment 4.2(c) and the Department believes that this type of collaboration will strengthen the

programs available in the field offices and those that will be available through the one-stop career centers.

### ***Consumer Satisfaction Phase III***

The Phase III Consumer Satisfaction project focuses on the employment of individuals with disabilities who have completed their Individual Plan for Employment. The survey was developed jointly by the Department and the State Rehabilitation Council. The project is currently in its pilot phase.

### ***Case Management Documentation Needs***

The survey work on the case managements documentation needs of the Department is complete. The methodology included a statewide survey to 800 staff members. The response rate for the survey appears to exceed 70 percent. The project team is working on its final report.

### **Estimates**

The Department's fiscal resources will remain stable for the balance of federal fiscal year 1999-2000. The Department's fiscal resources for federal fiscal year 2000- 2001 are projected to remain at approximately the 1999-2000 level. The Order of Selection for Vocational Rehabilitation Services Policy will remain in effect for the balance of 1999-2000 and through 2000-2001. The Department estimated in its state plan effective October 1, 1999, that it would process 45,000 applications for vocational rehabilitation services, and that approximately 37,000 of the applicants would be eligible for services subject to Order of Selection constraints. It was also estimated that in Program Year 2000, approximately 30,000 new Plans for Employment would be written. Presently the average cost per plan is \$1,900. The Department estimates that for the balance of Program Year 2000 the costs per plan will remain at this level because we will continue to serve individuals who are the most severely disabled.

The Department will be participating in the statewide one-stop career center network. This new service delivery method may impact the total numbers of individuals with disabilities served by the Department. There may be an increased number of applicants

for services, but there is no sound method to estimate the number of individuals who will be served or the number of applicants until the centers have been in operation long enough to establish some base numbers.

## **Goals and Priorities**

### ***Vision Statement***

Creating opportunities for employment, independence and participation in the community for Californians with disabilities.

### ***Mission***

The mission of the Department of Rehabilitation is to assist Californians with disabilities in obtaining and retaining employment and maximizing their ability to live independently in their communities.

### ***Goals***

- Provide vocational rehabilitation services to those individuals with the most severe disabilities first.
- Achieve a partnership between the State Rehabilitation Council and the Department through full implementation of Section 105(c)(4) of the Rehabilitation Act as Amended in 1998.
- Increase the quality and quantity of employment outcomes.
- Increase employer knowledge of the Department of Rehabilitation.
- Develop methods to improve internal and external communications.

- Represent the vocational rehabilitation and employment needs of individuals with disabilities in the California Workforce Investment System
- Improve administrative processes and the quality of Department services.
- Provide for a comprehensive system of personnel development.
- Maximize the availability and use of Assistive Technology.

### ***Priorities***

All the goals that have been established are very important to the Department in achieving the maximum results from the vocational rehabilitation service programs. The Department has selected the following goals as priorities.

- ◆ Provide vocational rehabilitation services to those individuals with the most severe disabilities first.
- ◆ Provide for a comprehensive system of personnel development.
- ◆ Increase the quality and quantity of employment outcomes.
- ◆ Achieve a partnership between the State Rehabilitation Council and the Department through full implementation of Section 105(c)(4) of the Rehabilitation Act as Amended in 1998.
- ◆ Represent the vocational rehabilitation and employment needs of individuals with disabilities in the California Workforce Investment System

# **California Department of Rehabilitation**

## **Vision and Goals For Workforce Investment**

### Vision Statement

The mission of the California Department of Rehabilitation is to assist Californians with disabilities to obtain and retain employment and to live independently in their community.

The California Department of Rehabilitation will take a leadership position in developing and implementing California's workforce investment system to advance the State's role in the global economy. California's workforce investment system will offer all Californians with disabilities the opportunity to maximize their employment potential - providing employers with a highly skilled, dynamic workforce, and supporting California's economic growth.

### Goals

1. The California Department of Rehabilitation will develop employment, training, and education programs which will be integrated in a manner which allows the needs of individuals with disabilities to be met, avoids duplication of services, and will maximize the use of the One-Stop Career Center System to provide services. The Workforce Investment System's customers include the employers who depend on the availability of a competitive skilled workforce. The Department of Rehabilitation will establish cooperative efforts with employers to facilitate coordinated job placement and support services. Within the One-Stop Career Center System, the Department shall:
  - A. develop a common intake method;
  - B. safeguard confidential information; and
  - C. provide a model for cost-sharing with other partners.
2. The California Department of Rehabilitation will provide relevant information about the labor market, about occupations, and about the variety of training and service providers in order to guide clients in making informed, effective decisions about their career objectives.
3. The California Department of Rehabilitation will provide training and technical assistance in the promotion of equal, effective, and meaningful participation by individuals with disabilities in the Workforce Investment System through the promotion of program

accessibility, the use of non-discrimination policies and the provision of reasonable accommodations. Within the One-Stop Career Center System, the Department shall:

1. provide improved program access to underserved ethnic/racial groups as well as underserved disability groups; and
  2. expand on-line access for its staff and for its consumers to all local technology that facilitates the matching of the job seeker with the employer.
4. The California Department of Rehabilitation will collaborate with partner agencies, service providers and One-Stop program operators to increase the number of employment outcomes for Californians with disabilities. These outcomes will be consistent with the client's career objective and income needs.
5. The California Department of Rehabilitation will actively participate on State and local boards to ensure that the Workforce Investment System adequately plans for and addresses the needs of Californians with disabilities.
6. The California Department of Rehabilitation will develop policies that promote statewide system building and provide local communities with the flexibility to design programs and services to meet local needs.
7. The California Department of Rehabilitation will ensure that the Workforce Investment System provides to transition-aged youth with disabilities the needed information and opportunities to achieve career goals that will allow them to successfully compete in the labor market of the twenty-first century.



California Department of Rehabilitation  
State Plan Update

**ATTACHMENT 4.12(c)(3)**

**GOALS and PLANS for DISTRIBUTION of  
TITLE VI, PART B FUNDS**

The Department utilizes all funding provided under Part 622, of the Act for the provision of supported employment services for eligible individuals. Individuals eligible for supported employment services in the State are individuals who:

- (1) are eligible for vocational rehabilitation services;
- (2) are determined to be individuals with the most significant disabilities; and
- (3) in a comprehensive assessment of rehabilitation needs, including an evaluation of rehabilitation, career, and job needs, supported employment was identified as the appropriate employment outcome for these individual.

These services include supported employment assessment, pre-placement services (including job matching and placement), and job coaching services.

In addition to the funds available under Part 622, the Department utilizes Title 1 funds as necessary to meet the needs of individuals with the most severe disabilities who are determined, based on the above criteria, to be eligible for supported employment services. It is expected, in State fiscal year 1999-2000 (June - July), that California will expend all funds made available under Part 622. The Department's estimates of the number of individuals to be served through supported employment and the number of successful closures have been consistent for several years. This reflects the impact of the Department's Order of Selection for Rehabilitation Services Policy. The Department will continue under an Order of Selection for Rehabilitation Services through the balance of Program Year 2000 and into Program Year 2001. Because of the continuation of the Order of Selection for Rehabilitation Services, the estimates of the numbers of individuals to be served and the successful closures have not changed under this plan.



California Department of Rehabilitation  
State Plan Update

**ATTACHMENT 4.12(d)**

**STRATEGIES**

The Department continually analyses the services being requested and client comments to determine the vocational rehabilitation needs of individuals with disabilities. There are ongoing reviews by executive staff and responses are developed. Responses can be informal or formal depending on the nature of the issue. The Department seeks immediate responses where possible, but where state regulations must be adopted or amended, the response takes longer and is formal as required by California's Administrative Procedures Act. Some of the assessments described in State Plan Attachment 4.12(a)(b)(c)(1) have not been completed, and the strategies cannot be fully developed until the final results have been analyzed. The Department, as required in Section 101(a)(15)(D) of the Rehabilitation Act, has in place strategies to achieve the goals and objectives set out in State Plan Attachment 4.12(a)(b)(c)(1). Additionally, the Department has strategies to accomplish the requirements set out in Section 101(a)(15)(D)(I)(ii)(iii)(iv) and (v) of the Rehabilitation Act.

**Section 101 Strategies**

***Expanded and Improved Services***

The strategies to expand and improve vocational rehabilitation services to individuals with disabilities will focus on the internal operations of the Department. The Department will expand the services it provides to individuals with disabilities through the development and maintenance of contractual relationships with community partners, devoting greater resources to the development of the individual plans for employment, enhancing job placement services, and providing vocational rehabilitation services through the one-stop centers. The Department will also work to expand services to more individuals through the management of its Order of Selection for Vocational Rehabilitation Services Policy. The Department will be improving the services it provides to individuals with disabilities by focusing on its counseling staff. The Comprehensive System of Personnel Development will increase the individual

skills of the counseling staff. The maintenance of staffing levels in the counselor classifications will also serve to improve services. The success of the Department's proposal to change the counselor classifications, outlined in State Plan Attachment 4.11(b), will improve services through more successful recruitment, development, and retention of counseling staff.

### ***Assistive Technology Services and Assistive Technology Devices***

The Department's vocational rehabilitation counselors are required to identify any need for rehabilitation technology, and to provide such service as necessary for the determination of eligibility. Counselors identify and discuss any rehabilitation technology needs in the development of the individual plan for employment, and they incorporate the provision of such services within the individual plan for employment as necessary to assist the client in obtaining or maintaining their employment outcome.

Rehabilitation technology needs are identified during the provision of employment services. At the time of placement, consideration is also given to the employer's responsibility to provide accommodations under the Americans with Disabilities Act.

Assistive technology devices and services are provided to applicants for whom a determination of eligibility cannot be made without the devices and services. Worksite assessments are also provided when necessary to make the required determinations.

However, when sufficient information is available from existing sources, the existing information is used.

The Department provides a wide range of training related to the provision of rehabilitation technology. Training is provided for rehabilitation staff (primarily counselors), client assistance personnel, and interested community partners (including school, regional center, independent living center and other staff).

## ***Outreach Procedures***

The Department, in each of its seventeen (17) districts, has developed outreach plans to identify and serve individuals with the most severe disabilities who are minorities. These plans include:

- Hiring counselors who possess the knowledge, cultural sensitivity and bilingual skills to work with specific minority populations throughout the state. To accomplish this, the Department has provided for targeted recruitment and testing to enable the Department to hire qualified individuals who meet this criteria;
- Providing diversity training to all counseling staff to assure appropriate cultural sensitivity when serving individuals with the most severe disabilities who are minorities;
- Providing written materials, including the client handbook, descriptive brochures, and consumer satisfaction questionnaires in multiple languages;
- Assuring that districts have interpreter lists based on their local needs;
- Networking with agencies serving minority populations in order to identify and outreach to individuals with the most severe disabilities, assigning liaison counselors as appropriate;
- Participating in training and outreach activities focused on serving Native Americans on the reservations and in the relocation areas; and
- Encouraging the use of transitional employment to enable individuals with the most severe disabilities who are minorities to pursue career objectives.

## ***Community Rehabilitation Programs***

In 1997 the Field Operations Division of the Department conducted an assessment to identify community rehabilitation program services that are needed, but not available to clients, in all areas of the State. The results of this assessment indicated a significant need, across the majority of districts, for employment services. The Department addressed these client service needs through a proposed \$3 million establishment grant program which was initiated in State Fiscal Year 1997-98. The Department will be making additional grants this year based upon an assessment of the current statewide needs.

The first year of the three-year establishment grant cycle was funded in State Fiscal Year 1997-98. The follow-up studies indicated that the need for employment services still existed in all areas of the State. The Department is awarding continuation grants to respond to that need. The second grant cycle will be completed during the State Fiscal Year 1999-2000. To assure that the areas where community rehabilitation program service capacities need to be strengthened, the Department will continue to work with the State Rehabilitation Council and the Rehabilitation Continuing Education Program (RCEP) in Region IX of the Rehabilitation Services Administration and continue to make recommendations jointly with the Community Rehabilitation Programs for Community Rehabilitation Program staff education and training. The Community Rehabilitation Program will be supporting the following types of programs statewide:

- Employment Services
- Occupational Skills Training
- Supported Employment
- Rehabilitation Technology
- Vocational Evaluation
- Independent Living Skills Training
- Self-Employment Development
- Situational Assessment
- Communication and Language Skills (Deaf)
- Interpreter Services

### ***Evaluation Standards and Performance Indicators***

The Department has completed an initial study of quality performance indicators with regard to the Vocational Rehabilitation Services Program. The information from the study is used to help guide the Department's counseling staff in developing the Individualized Plan for Employment. The Department will formally adopt the core indicators of performance to match those adopted by the Rehabilitation Services Administration. Prior to the adoption of federal performance indicators, the Department has begun tracking its performance against the proposed federal standards. The Department will also, to the extent practicable, adopt the evaluation standards established in the Workforce Investment Act Section 136(b).

The Department's Community Rehabilitation Programs staff has begun the work necessary to develop core indicators of performance for their grant funded programs.

The core indicators will be incorporated into the grant protocols. The core indicators will go beyond the number of individuals served to begin measuring the quality of the services provided through the grant.

### ***Statewide Workforce Investment System***

The Department is maintaining its presence at all planning meetings for implementing the Statewide Workforce Investment System. The Department will continue to be part of the planning for and implementation of the Statewide Workforce Investment System. The Department's seventeen district administrators have been authorized to negotiate with their local entities to carry out components, which will assist individuals with disabilities.

The district administrators are active in the development of their local area workforce boards, negotiating the Department's staffing levels in the one-stop centers, and the necessary memorandums if understanding. The district administrators are preparing letters of support for the grandfathering of existing boards as local area boards where it is appropriate. Where the boards lack a member qualified to represent the interests of individuals with disabilities, the district administrators are working to insure that the newly forming boards to have the required representation.

The Department and the California Employment Development Department have two pilot programs started to explore ways to maximize service delivery in a cooperative setting. The California Initiative for Full Employment is operating in two sites, San Diego and Santa Rosa. These sites feature the full array of job services and are fully accessible. These sites will develop into models for the one-stop centers and the field offices of the Employment Development Department.

The Department is actively involved in numerous Workforce Investment Act task force and advisory committees which have been organized by the State Job Training Coordinating Council and the Employment Development Department. The Department has been active on the:

- State Job Training Coordinating Council Advisory Group
- State Job Training Coordinating Council WIA Transition Task Force
- State Job Training Coordinating Council One-Stop Task Force
- WIA Transition Workgroup

· Performance Based Accountability

The Department is developing guidance papers covering a variety of topics and issues. The guidance papers will become part of a guidance book available to all staff members in regards to Workforce Investment Act implementation. The topics and issues were identified by the Field Operations Division. They were then given to group facilitators, who convened a group to explore their topic and develop a guidance paper. The papers are reviewed by a work group in the Central Office who bring a different perspective to the project. The guidance books will be available to staff members, community rehabilitation programs, and other partners who may need some guidance in developing projects or working in the post implementation era. The current issues and topics in the guidance project are:

- Letters of Support/Opposition to Grand fathering of Existing Local Boards
- Memorandum of Understanding with Local Workforce Investment Board
- Co-Location of Staff at a One-Stop Center
- Cost Sharing in a One-Stop Center
- General Information and Training on the Workforce Investment Act
- Connectivity in One-Stop Centers( electronic linkage)
- Participation in Core Services
- The Role of the Local Representative on the Local Area Workforce Investment Board
- The Counselor's Role in a One-Stop Environment
- Confidentiality
- Training Provided by Staff to One-Stop Partners
- Philosophical Overview of WIA
- Youth Council and Youth Services
- ADA Training



## **Assessment Strategies**

### **Provide vocational rehabilitation services to those individuals with the most severe disabilities first**

The Department will remain under its Order of Selection for Vocational Rehabilitation Services Policy. The Policy has been amended in Title 9 of the California Code of Regulations. The process to amend the Policy included public hearings. Attachment 4.12(c)(2)(a) describes the changes and their benefit. The Department is continuing with its policy of keeping the categories open for longer periods. This decision assists the Department's referral sources and partners in planning the continuum of services individuals with disabilities require to successfully achieve or retain employment. Providing vocational rehabilitation services to those individual's who are the most severely disabled continues to be the Department's priority. As part of this priority work, the Department's goal is to minimize changes to the priority categories being served. The Order of Selection for Vocational Rehabilitation Services Policy will continue to be reviewed to achieve inter-rater reliability in the current policy and to seek simplification for the Severity of Disability determination tool.

### **Provide for a comprehensive system of personnel development**

The strategies to achieve full implementation of the required Comprehensive System of Personnel Development are outlined in Attachment 4.11(b). Please refer to Attachment 4.11(b) for information on this strategy.

### **Increase the quality and quantity of employment outcomes**

All base information that is required and available for measuring the quality and quantity of employment outcomes has been identified. Standards for defining quality of employment outcomes and a process to measure improved employment outcomes have been proposed. The data developed from the Consumer Satisfaction Phase III Survey (see description under Assessments) will be coupled with information on measuring the quality and quantity of employment outcomes and the proposed quality standards for presentation to the State Rehabilitation Council. The State Rehabilitation Council will assist the Department in planning future strategies that will enhance both the quality of placements and the quantity of placements.

**Achieve a partnership between the State Rehabilitation Council and the Department through full implementation of Section 105(c)(4) of the Rehabilitation Act as Amended in 1998.**

To achieve a full partnership between the State Rehabilitation Council and the Department, the goals and priorities for the vocational rehabilitation programs will be jointly developed and reviewed annually. Annual reports of progress will be jointly submitted. New policies and procedures and modifications of existing policies and procedures which are generally applicable to the vocational rehabilitation programs will be presented to the Council for consultation prior to implementation. The State Plan and revisions to the State Plan will include a summary of input provided by the Council. The State plan and revisions to the State Plan will include the Department's response to the Council input. The Department will provide the resources necessary for the Council to conduct a needs assessment of individuals with disabilities as required by the Rehabilitation Act.

To insure that the Council is fully aware of the status and activities of the Department, the following are transmitted to the Council:

- All plans, reports and other information required to be submitted to the Rehabilitation Services Administration,
- Copies of policies and information on practices and procedures of general applicability provided to or used by rehabilitation personnel in carrying out the vocational rehabilitation program, and
- Results of all due process hearings (the transmission of the hearings will be done in a manner to protect the confidentiality of the individuals involved).

The partnership will include having representatives of the Council attend any public meeting sponsored by the Department. It will also include inviting the Council to participate in work groups charged with developing policies and procedures. Of particular importance for Council participation is the development of the Comprehensive System of Personnel Development and the Comprehensive Needs Assessment.

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**ATTACHMENT 4.12(e)**

**EVALUATION and REPORTS of PROGRESS**

**EVALUATION**

Section 105(c)(2)(A) of Title IV of the Workforce Investment Act of 1998, requires the State Rehabilitation Council (SRC), in partnership with the designated State unit, prepare an evaluation of the effectiveness of the vocational rehabilitation program. The evaluation must be submitted to the Commissioner of the Rehabilitation Services Administration. Section 101(a)(15)(e)(i) indicates the report shall include:

- An evaluation of the extent to which the goals identified in (C) were achieved;
- A description of strategies that contributed to achieving the goals;
- To the extent to which the goals were not achieved, a description of the factors that impeded achievement; and
- An assessment of the performance of the States on the standards and indicators established pursuant to Section 106.

**Report for Program year 2000-01**

It is the joint recommendation of the SRC and the Department that the Report for Program Year 2000-01 be a description of the evaluation process and procedure that will be developed and utilized for the Report for Program Year 2001-02. The key elements of that process and procedure are:

1. The evaluation process and procedures will be developed jointly by the SRC and the Department, the evaluation will be conducted jointly and the report will be a joint effort.

2. The level of achievement of the goals in the prior year's State Plan will be reviewed. Strategies for implementation that were successful will be identified and described, as will obstacles to implementation.
3. The Department's responses to the SRC's program recommendations in the prior year's State Plan and the implementation of those recommendations will be reviewed and commented upon.
4. The performance of the State on the standards and indicators required by Section 106 will be assessed.
5. The performance of the State may be assessed for other criteria. Such criteria will be developed and adopted by the SRC and the Department.
6. A variety of data will be utilized for the above points including, but not limited to consumer satisfaction, needs assessments, district evaluations, financial/cost, job placement and other vocational rehabilitation program data.

The Department and the SRC will, prior to the report, develop the evaluation report process details. Along with the process detail, measurable goals will be established where applicable.

## **REPORTS of PROGRESS**

The Department will continue submitting to the Commissioner of the Rehabilitation Services Administration reports containing annual updates of the information required relating to the Comprehensive System of Personnel Development and any other updates of the information required under Section 101(a)(23) of the Rehabilitation Act. The Department will submit any other updates of the information

required in Section 101 of the Rehabilitation Act as may be requested by the Commissioner and annual reports relating to assessments, estimates, goals and priorities, and reports of progress relating to innovation and expansion at such time and in such manner as the Secretary of the Department of Education may determine to be appropriate.

## **ATTACHMENT 4.12(c)(2)(A)**

### **ORDER OF SELECTION**

The Department has operated its Vocational Rehabilitation Services Program under an Order of Selection policy since the original declaration dated August 18, 1995. The Department cannot assure that it will be able to provide the full range of services listed in section 103(a) of the Act and subsection 5.1 of this State plan, as appropriate, to all eligible individuals with disabilities in the State who apply for services. In the absence of that assurance, the Department will continue to operate its Vocational Rehabilitation Program under an Order of Selection Policy. The Department's regulations, affecting the definition of individuals, who are the most severely disabled, were amended effective November 11, 1999.

### **SELECTING ELIGIBLE INDIVIDUALS**

Prior to the November 11, 1999, amendment, to be categorized as severely disabled an individual must have one of the enumerated disabilities or a similar condition, at least one serious impact caused by disability in a functional capacity area, require multiple vocational rehabilitation services over an extended period of time, and have an overall significance scale score from four through fifteen. Under the prior version of the regulations, an individual must meet the first four criteria cited above and have a significance scale score of sixteen or greater to be most severely disabled. Prior to the 1998 Amendments to the Rehabilitation Act, Section 102(a)(2)(B) of the Act provided that an individual who has a disability or is blind pursuant to Title II or Title XVI of the Social Security Act shall be considered to have a severe physical or mental impairment that seriously limits one or more functional capacities. This provision was incorporated into the Department's regulations at Section 7051(a)(9)(B), which provided that recipients of Supplemental Security Income or Social Security Disability Insurance (SSI/SSDI) benefits are determined to have a serious impact in a functional capacity area. Having at least one serious impact in a functional capacity area is only

one of the five factors that must be present for an individual to be considered severely disabled or most severely disabled. Thus, under the regulations prior to the regulation amendment, recipients of SSI/SSDI automatically meet one of the criteria of the severely disabled and most severely disabled categories. However, the Rehabilitation Counselors still had to complete the assessment and scoring process for those individuals to determine whether they have one of the enumerated disabilities, how many vocational rehabilitation services they require, how long their vocational rehabilitation will take, and what their overall significance scale scores should be.

In the 1998 Amendments to the Rehabilitation Act (PL 105-220), the treatment of SSI/SSDI recipients was modified. Pursuant to Section 102(a)(3) (29 USC 722(a)(3)), SSI/SSDI recipients shall be considered to be individuals with significant disabilities. The 1998 Amendments replaced the term “severe” with the term “significant” for purposes of categorizing the levels of disabilities. However, the factors in determining whether an individual has a significant disability or a most significant disability remain the same as those for determining whether the individual has a severe disability or a most severe disability.

The November amendments to the Department’s regulations incorporated this modified treatment of SSI/SSDI recipients, making the Department’s regulations consistent with federal law and streamlining the severity of disability determination process by providing that all SSI/SSDI recipients are automatically considered to be severely disabled. The counselors will not have to complete the time-consuming scoring process for those individuals when, as now, the Department is serving individuals in the severely disabled category. Nor will they have to determine whether they meet the other four criteria for severely disabled individuals. If the Department modified its order of selection so that it is serving only the most severely disabled, under the amendment, the counselors must calculate only significance scale scores for SSI/SSDI recipients because the only difference in the criteria for severely disabled and most severely disabled is the significance scale score. Thus, the Counselors will not have to determine whether the individuals meet the other four criteria. The Department also removed from its regulations a provision regarding considering SSI/SSDI recipients to have a serious impact in one functional capacity area that is no longer necessary because the treatment of SSI/SSDI recipients under federal law changed.

The Department will continue to monitor its Order of Selection Policy to insure equitable treatment of all individuals with a disability. The Department will continue reviewing its Order of Selection Policy seeking ways to streamline and simplify the process to further reduce the burden on counselors.



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**ATTACHMENT 4.16(b)(2)**

**MEDIATION AND IMPARTIAL DUE PROCESS HEARING  
PROCEDURES**

The Department has continuously provided rights and remedies programs to assist applicants and eligible individuals with eligibility and service decisions going back to its original ombudsman program. Mediation will soon be added to the other available programs. In response to the 1998 Amendments to the Rehabilitation Act, the Department's budget was augmented to pay for costs related to the addition of mediation services to the existing impartial due process hearing procedures. The Department has continued to make available the administrative review and the impartial due process hearings while developing the new mediation program required in Section 102(d) of the Rehabilitation Act.

The due process hearing procedures, administrative review process, and the Client Assistance Program remain in effect while a new mediation system is developed for inclusion in the options available to assist applicants and eligible individuals. While the Rehabilitation Act Amendments of 1998 stipulate that the Department must make mediation services available, there are no Federal regulations or subregulatory guidance to clarify the mediation process requirements. The Department is establishing procedures it believes will achieve compliance with Section 112(c) of the Rehabilitation Act.

- The Department will provide mediation services through one or more independent contractors who possess the skills and experience necessary to assist the Department and the Department's applicants and eligible individuals.
- The independent contractor or contractors will be provided training similar to the training provided Client

Assistance Program advocates. The training will cover federal laws and regulations relating to the provision of vocational rehabilitation services under the Act as required in Section 102(c)(4)(C).

- The contractor or contractors will provide training in mediation process to Department representatives and Client Assistance Program representatives.
- The mediation services will be an additional alternative for dispute resolution available to applicants and eligible individuals.
- Information related to the availability of mediation services will be added to the notifications currently provided to eligible individuals and applicants regarding their right to Administrative Review, the Client Assistance Program, and Appeal Board hearings (DR form 1000 rev 8/98).

Information related to the availability of mediation services will be included in the Client Information Booklet and reviewed during applicant orientation meetings.

The DR form 1000 is provided to applicants and eligible individuals with each major notification including DR 222 Application for Vocational Rehabilitation Services, DR 211 Eligibility Determination Extension, DR 229A Rehabilitation Program Report, and the DR 68 series related to Order of Selection.

- Mediation will be described as another option for resolving disputes with the Department. It is a voluntary problem-solving process, assisted by qualified, impartial mediators from outside the Department available upon request. Mediation will be described as having as its goals to fully describe both sides of the conflict,

explore options for resolving the problem, and reach a mutually satisfying solution.

- Mediation services will always be free to applicants and eligible individuals, and representatives of the individual are always welcome to attend mediation sessions.
- Mediation services may be requested by either or both parties to the dispute (by applicants and eligible individuals and/or by the Department) while any other available dispute resolution procedure is being pursued.
- Acceptance of the request for mediation services by the individual and/or the Department is voluntary.
- The applicant or eligible individual may be present or have their representative present at the mediation sessions.
- During all mediation sessions, the applicant, eligible individual, and/or the Department can present evidence if they choose to do so.
- Mediation services will be made available to applicants and eligible individuals as soon as the contracts are signed and the training completed.

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**ATTACHMENT 7.3**

**Quality, Scope, and Extent of  
Supported Employment Services**

The Department provides the full scope of supported employment services to individuals with the most severe disabilities. The individuals participating in supported employment services are subject to the Department's Order of Selection for Vocational Rehabilitation Services Policy and can only begin services if they are in the priority category for services currently being served. Supported Employment includes, if necessary, trial employment to assess the individuals' interests, and/or to determine the techniques of support most suited to assisting the individual to learn the work skills and work behaviors necessary for employment.

The Department purchases, primarily through community rehabilitation programs, educational institutions, and county mental health providers those services which provide the successful job match and placement. In areas where provider organizations are not available, or an individual has needs beyond those which can be met by an individual provider, a job tutor may provide this service.

Once an individual is matched with an identified supported employment position, the Department provides job coaching for a period not to exceed eighteen (18) months. The job coaching services can be extended beyond eighteen months with justification by the Vocational Rehabilitation Counselor. The job coaching services vary from one-to-one support on the job, to one-to-eight support on the job when individuals with disabilities are working together in the community in a small group. Job coaching services may also be provided off the job as necessary when working with employers, care providers, advocacy groups, or in the provision of other services necessary to assist the individual in maintaining employment. Job coaching is funded by the vocational rehabilitation program until the individual is considered to be stable in employment, and has maintained that stability for at least 60 days.

Once the individual has maintained stability on the job for at least 60 days, the funding for, or provision of, job coaching transitions to the extended service provider. The rehabilitation counselor continues to track the individual's progress and job stability during the transition period. If, after 60 days of service by the extended service provider the individual maintains their job stability, the case is closed successfully.

The Department has found the provision of supported employment integral to achieving successful job placement while operation under its Order of Selection for Vocational Rehabilitation Services Policy. Since August 18, 1995, the Department has only been able to provide vocational rehabilitation services to individuals who are the most severely disabled. These represents individuals most likely to benefit from supported employment services.

Supported Employment Services are provided by the Department through two programs. The services are provided through the Vocational Rehabilitation Services Program and the Habilitation Program. The Habilitation Program serves a separate population and the funding is provided by the State. The Habilitation Program is staffed separately from the Vocational Rehabilitation Services Program with Habilitation Specialists. The rate paid to service providers is legislatively mandated. The Department pays for services for both programs at the same rate. The California Welfare and Institutions Code (Section 19355.5) requires the Department implement a rate reduction trigger for job coaching hourly rates. The trigger will keep the costs within the General Fund and Reimbursement appropriations for habilitation and vocational rehabilitation supported employment services. It appears that the Department will be required to reduce the hourly fee to achieve the required compliance.

The Department has been working with the California Department of Finance, the Governor's Office, and the California Health and Human Services Agency to mitigate the impact on service providers. The Department has proposals pending that will gradually reduce the rate giving providers time to adjust to the rate change. Additionally, the Department is working with the providers and their professional associations on ways to reduce the amount by which the rate will have to be reduced. The immediate goal in this area, of both the Department and the providers, is to maintain the level of services available to individuals who benefit from supported employment services.

